



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **More Graffiti Vandals Arrested**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA – July 2, 2012**

Over the course of the last three weeks officers and detectives from the Santa Barbara Police Department arrested three juvenile male graffiti vandals responsible for over \$20,000.00 worth of damage throughout the city.

On June 13, 2012, at 8:57 a.m., Officer Gary Siegel was on patrol when he observed a moniker that he recognized that had been recently spray painted on the Anapamu Foot Bridge. The moniker belonged to a 17-year old North-end resident who was last arrested for vandalism by SBPD on April 19, 2012, and was waiting sentencing in that case. Officer Siegel, a 16-year veteran of the department and former Youth Services Section detective and Gang Suppression Team officer, is an expert in investigating graffiti vandalism cases. He was aware that taggers often change their monikers after they have been identified or arrested; and upon closer examination of the graffiti on the bridge he found other tags with enough stylistic similarities that he was certain they were painted by the same suspect. Later that day Officer Siegel confronted the suspect at his residence, who initially denied committing any vandalism since his arrest in April. However, when presented with the evidence against him, the suspect not only confessed to committing the vandalism to the Anapamu Foot Bridge but also to additional vandalisms at La Cumbre Plaza, the former Vons Supermarket at 34 W. Victoria Street, and 1025 Santa Barbara Street; all crimes which he said he had done the night before. This case was forwarded to the District Attorney's Office to file a charge against the suspect for felony vandalism.

On June 20, 2012, at 6:44 a.m., Officer Carl Kamin and Officer Siegel documented extensive graffiti vandalisms to business and residential properties on 800 & 900 Bath Street, 200 & 300 W. Carrillo Street, 200 W. Canon Perdido Street, and 800 De La Vina Street. The monikers in this case were new to the officers; however once again Officer Siegel recognized stylistic elements in the tags that made him suspect a 15-year old Westside resident that was recently placed on probation as a result of a vandalism arrest. Officer Kamin and Officer Siegel obtained a surveillance video from a victim's business that recorded a portion of the crimes taking place. Upon viewing the video Officer Siegel's suspicion was confirmed when he recognized the aforementioned probationer caught tagging on camera. On the morning of June 21, 2012, Youth Services Section Detective Ben Ahrens and Detective Mike Brown arrested the suspect at San Marcos High School where he attends summer school. When interviewed the suspect initially stated that he hadn't committed any vandalisms since he was released from Juvenile

Hall in May. However, when confronted with the fact that he was captured on video, the suspect acknowledged his role in the vandalisms from the day before. The suspect was booked at Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall for violation of probation and felony vandalism.

On June 20, 2012, at 1:58 a.m., at the intersection of Mission Street and De La Vina Street, Officer Doug Klug and Officer Daniel Garcia contacted three intoxicated youths who were in violation of the city's 10:00 p.m. juvenile curfew. The three received citations for the curfew violation and were searched; one of them, a 16-year old, was found to be in possession of two Sharpie markers and numerous Postal Service address mailing labels that had tagging crew monikers written on them. The officers recognized the pens and labels to be implements of a popular form of vandalism called "slap tagging;" where vandals write their monikers on labels in advance and then quickly and easily adhere them to objects in the community without getting caught. Postal Service labels are especially popular for this activity because they are durable and difficult to remove. Later in the day Officer Beth Lazarus and Detective Ahrens used the Graffiti Tracker Database to research the monikers written on the Postal Service labels found in the suspect's possession. They discovered six documented incidents within the last seven months in Santa Barbara involving the monikers. The incidents took place on 600 Kentia Avenue, 600 Pilgrim Terrace Drive, and 500 W. Mission Street. On June 27, 2012, Detective Ahrens authored arrest and search warrants for the suspect and his Westside residence. He, along with Sergeant Noel Rivas, Detective Brown, Officer Siegel, and Officer Lazarus served the warrants and took the suspect into custody. Items corroborating the suspect's involvement in vandalisms were seized, including two bags of Sharpie markers and four scrapbooks with samples of his work. The suspect was mostly uncooperative with the investigation, however he did admit to committing some of the aforementioned crimes when confronted with the similarities between what was found in his scrapbooks and the graffiti that was left at the scenes. The suspect was booked into Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall for felony vandalism.

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